

443.13 Vehicle Containment Techniques and Tire-Deflation Devices

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SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the options, tools, requirements, training, authorization, and reporting for sworn officers relating to Vehicle Containment Techniques (VCT) and tire-deflation devices. Vehicle Containment Techniques may be initiated and utilized to restrict the movements of a suspect vehicle, with the goal of preventing the suspect(s) from escaping in the vehicle and initiating a pursuit.

Vehicle Containment Techniques may be utilized depending on the situation and the articulable facts known or believed at the time. Some VCTs require additional authorization and training, which are highlighted below. The use of these tactics is meant to reduce the overall risk to the public, the individual being apprehended, as well as our officers. Additionally, these tactics can aid in the preservation and recovery of evidence and contraband items.

Vehicle Interdiction Tactics (VIT) involve trained SWAT personnel only and may involve intentional vehicle contact with both moving and stationary vehicles. This is considered intermediate force and requires pre-authorization as highlighted below.

Tire Deflation Devices are one tool that can successfully aid officers by means of preventing pursuits or ending pursuits should one occur. The use of Tire Deflation Devices, including reporting and training, is defined in this policy.

Roadblocks (both Moving and Stationary) are not considered vehicle containment techniques. Roadblocks are authorized under General Order 443.00 for vehicle pursuits, when deadly force is authorized under MN State Statute 609.066.

SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Intentional Vehicle Contact** – The deliberate act of impacting a violator’s vehicle with another vehicle to force the violator’s vehicle to stop or prevent vehicle movement.
- B. **EVOC** – Emergency Vehicle Operator Course.
- C. **Fleeing Prevention Device** – A commercially manufactured device intended for deployment by an officer on a vehicle that is stopped or slow moving (25 MPH or less). The “Terminator” and “Patrol Terminator” are the only authorized devices for this purpose.
- The “Patrol Terminator” devices are the only authorized devices permitted to be deployed.
- D. **Fully Marked Squad** - Any pursuit-rated vehicle that has permanent, clearly identifying police markings, a light bar, In-Car Camera equipment and siren.
- E. **Low Profile Squad** –Any pursuit rated vehicle that has permanent or temporary door markings, siren, without a light bar but with emergency lights visible from the front, sides, and rear, and In Car Camera equipment installed.
- F. **Patrol Terminator** – The only authorized tire deflation device permitted to be deployed in a patrol capacity on a stationary or slow-moving vehicle (25 MPH or less).
- G. **Pinning** – The use of a police vehicle to safely make physical contact with, and contain, the suspect’s vehicle. Pinning occurs when a suspect’s vehicle is stopped. Pinning is not vehicle ramming or intended to disable the vehicle. Because the technique is applied when a suspect vehicle is stopped, it is considered a low-level force option and not intended to cause damage.
- H. **Ramming** – The use of a police vehicle to physically contact a suspect vehicle, at more than low speeds, is likely to cause damage, and is a high-level force option. The use of ramming must have compelling and exigent circumstances, and no other reasonable means of stopping the vehicle are available. Ref. Minnesota State Statute 609.066. and General Order 443.00
- I. **Ride-along** – A person who is not a Saint Paul sworn officer who has approval to ride-along with a Saint Paul officer in a police vehicle.
- J. **Stationary Roadblock** – The intentional act of parking squad cars or other

vehicles on a roadway, in the travel lanes, with the intent of stopping a pursued vehicle, thereby slowing the vehicle or preventing the vehicle from passing the barrier. *Ref. Minnesota State Statute 609.066.*

- K. **Stop Sticks** – A Commercially manufactured tire deflation device intended for deployment in authorized active pursuits ahead of the pursued vehicle. “Stop Sticks” are the only authorized device for this purpose.
- L. **Tire Deflation Device** – Commercially manufactured law enforcement products, purchased by the department called “Stop Sticks” and,” Patrol Terminators”, designed to deflate vehicle tires.
- M. **Vehicle Containment Technique (VCT)** – The coordinated use of police vehicles by police personnel to restrict the movement of a suspect vehicle by blocking or pinning the suspect vehicle with the goal of preventing the suspect(s) from escaping in the vehicle and initiating a pursuit.
- N. **Vehicle Interdiction Tactic (VIT)** – A pre-planned containment tactic that employs low-speeds and potential intentional vehicle contact with a suspect’s vehicle. The purpose is to stop/contain/capture a vehicle and to render the vehicle immobile or unable to bring further harm (present or potential) to human lives. This tactic can be used on both stationary and moving vehicles and may include intentional contact with the vehicle.
- O. **Violent Felony Offense** - Criminal offenses and suspected offenses, as believed or known by the officer(s) at the time of incident.
- 1) Violent felonies applicable to this policy are limited to:
- Homicide, Manslaughter or attempts of these crimes. See Minnesota Statutes [609.185](#) through [609.195](#), [609.20](#), [609.205](#), [609.2112](#), and [609.2113](#).
 - Aggravated Robbery, including “Carjacking,” involving serious injury, firearm, or weapon capable of causing great bodily harm or death. See Minnesota Statutes [609.245](#).
 - Dangerous Weapons used under circumstances to inflict or threaten death or great bodily harm to a person. See Minnesota Statutes [609.66 Subd. 1A \(3\)](#).
 - Kidnapping involving acts of violence. See Minnesota Statutes [609.25](#).
 - Criminal Sexual Conduct involving acts of violence.
 - Aggravated Assault with a firearm or weapon capable of causing great bodily harm or death. See Minnesota Statutes [609.221](#) through [609.223](#).
 - Terrorist acts or actions that may cause mass casualties, including but not limited to ramming attacks involving a vehicle, active shooter threats or actions or possession of suspected explosives.

SECTION 3. VEHICLE CONTAINMENT TECHNIQUES (VCT)

A. LOW-RISK - Patrol Operations:

Description:

1. A Low-Risk Vehicle Containment Technique (VCT) is a maneuver conducted by police personnel during which police vehicle(s) are positioned around a stationary vehicle to prevent movement or avenues of escape.
2. Police vehicles used to conduct a VCT must be equipped with emergency lights visible from the front, rear, and sides. Emergency lights will be activated upon the execution of a VCT.
3. Officers performing A Low-Risk VCT will be wearing visible police markings (VPM).
4. A Low-Risk VCT is only to be used on stationary vehicles and does NOT involve Pinning, Ramming or Intentional Vehicle Contact as defined in Section 1.

Approved Training/Training Requirements:

1. For use only by sworn department personnel who have completed and are current with EVOC certification and completed the Low-Risk VCT training.

Deployment Requirement:

1. Does not require pre-authorization. Officers should be mindful that deploying this technique requires coordination and communication to create successful containment and suspect apprehension.

Approved Use:

1. The use of a Low-Risk VCT is approved to contain a vehicle and prevent a vehicle pursuit during the following law enforcement actions:
 - i. Effecting the arrest of an occupant of the subject vehicle who is a wanted person.
 - ii. Lawfully detaining an occupant of the subject vehicle to further an investigation.
 - iii. Containing a vehicle which has previously fled from law enforcement, or officers reasonably believe will flee from law enforcement without containment.

Disapproved use:

1. The use of a VCT is not approved for non-sworn, civilian, professional staff or any other member of the department who does not hold a valid peace officer's license and/or is not currently EVOC certified.
2. Officers who are hosting a ride-a-long are prohibited from participating in a VCT deployment but may assist in a supporting role in the apprehension of the individual.

B. HIGH-RISK - Specialty Units:

Description:

1. A High-Risk Vehicle Containment Technique (VCT) is a maneuver conducted by police personnel during which the use of fully marked, low profile or unmarked police vehicle(s) are positioned around an individual's stationary vehicle to prevent movement or avenues of escape.
2. Police vehicles used to conduct a High-Risk VCT must be equipped with emergency lights visible from the front, rear, and sides. Emergency lights will be activated upon the execution of a VCT.
3. Officers performing A High-Risk VCT will be wearing visible police markings (VPM).
4. A High-Risk VCT is only used on stationary vehicles and *may* involve pinning, or intentional vehicle contact as defined in Section 1.

Approved Personnel/Training Requirements:

1. Restricted for use only by sworn department personnel who are assigned to SWAT or specialty investigative units and have received ongoing training in tactics and techniques related to vehicle pinning and High-Risk VCT tactics.
2. High-Risk VCT training records are maintained in the Training Unit. The Unit Commander will ensure that certifications are up to date, and that a copy of the training certification are forwarded to the Training Unit.

Deployment Requirement:

1. Requires approval from the Command level or higher.

Approved Use:

A High-Risk VCT may be used as part of an operational plan, or with verbal Command approval during rapidly unfolding events. The use of a High-Risk VCT is approved to

contain a vehicle and prevent a vehicle pursuit during the following law enforcement actions:

- a. Effecting the arrest of an occupant of the subject vehicle who is wanted for a Violent Felony Offense as defined in section 2 who may pose a flight risk
- b. Effecting the arrest of an occupant of the subject vehicle who, if not immediately apprehended, may pose an immediate risk to the safety of others

Disapproved use:

1. The use of High-Risk VCT is not approved for use by sworn members of the department who are not assigned to SWAT or specialty investigative units and/or have not received ongoing training in tactics and techniques related to vehicle pinning and High-Risk VCT tactics.

C. VEHICLE INTERDICTION TACTIC (VIT) – SWAT Personnel

Description:

1. Vehicle Interdiction Tactic (VIT) is a pre-planned containment tactic that employs low-speeds and potential intentional vehicle contact with a subject's vehicle.
2. The purpose of a VIT is to stop/contain/capture a vehicle and to render the vehicle immobile or unable to bring further harm (present or potential) to human lives.
3. A VIT is accomplished by containing the vehicle on all possible sides with other police vehicles. This tactic can be used on both stationary and moving vehicles and may include intentional contact with the vehicle.
4. A VIT maneuver is NOT a PIT maneuver (Pursuit Intervention Tactic – a maneuver in which a vehicle is intentionally and abruptly turned sideways by a pursuing vehicle to cause it to lose control/stop). PIT maneuvers are not authorized.

Certification/Training Requirements:

1. Restricted for use only by S.W.A.T. (Not approved for patrol division).
 - a. Annual training required.
 - b. VIT training records are maintained in the Training Unit. The SWAT Commander will ensure that certifications are up to date, and that a copy of the training certifications are forwarded to the Training Unit.

Deployment Requirement:

1. Requires approval from the Chief of Police or his/her designee.

Approved Use:

1. The use of a VIT is approved to effect the arrest of a person wanted for a violent felony who may pose a flight risk or an immediate risk to the safety of others; or if not immediately apprehended, may pose further/continual risk of harm to others.

Disapproved use:

1. The use of a VIT is not approved for use outside of a SWAT operation or by an officer not assigned to SWAT.
2. A VIT is not allowed in any situation that due to speed and driving behavior of the subject any attempt to deploy this tactic would create additional unreasonable risk to those involved and/or the general public.

D. Additional Considerations when using LOW-RISK VCT, HIGH-RISK VCT, and VIT

Officers are expected to drive with due care while also employing these specialized tactics during Low and High-Risk VCT and VIT operations.

Natural or pre-set barriers may act as a block to safely restrict movement of a suspect vehicle. Examples of a pre-set barrier would be buildings, walls, other parked vehicles, fences, and other natural barriers with the ability to limit a vehicle's movement.

Factors to consider when determining to use or not use a VCT/VIT:

1. Areas with pedestrians.
2. Other vehicle traffic.
3. Parked vehicles.
4. Telephone/utility poles.
5. Bridges/overpasses.
6. Areas adjacent to paved roads with a significant elevation change.
7. Significant curves in the roadway.
8. Weather and road conditions.
9. Size/weight of the subject's vehicle compared to the police vehicle.

This policy does not prohibit an officer from using their squad car as a means to confront an immediate deadly force situation. Ref. Minnesota State Statute 609.066.

Should the individual in control of the target vehicle escape from an attempted or established VCT/VIT by controlling and moving the vehicle, then the department's established pursuit policy shall apply Ref. SPPD G.O. 443.00 Vehicle Pursuit - General

If any vehicle contact occurs from the use of a VCT or VIT, regardless of damage that results, a supervisor should be summoned to the scene. The supervisor should ensure that the VCT or VIT usage is properly documented in a police report.

If intentional vehicle contact is utilized or occurs during the course of a High-Risk VCT or VIT and new damage occurs to either the target vehicle or any involved department vehicle, then the following established policy shall apply. SPPD G.O. 640.06 Crashes Involving Department Vehicles.

The lowest reasonable level of vehicle blocking tactics should be deployed when weighed

against the known or reasonably believed circumstances. Nothing in this section mandates the use of a VCT/VIT when other apprehension tactics are reasonable within the circumstances.

SECTION 4. TIRE DEFLATION DEVICES

Because of the risks involved with vehicle pursuits, officers and supervisors should tactically, with approved tools and techniques, attempt to mitigate the likelihood or duration of a pursuit whenever possible. Tire deflation devices can prevent pursuits from initiating, thereby creating much less risk for the officers and the community. These devices can also aid in resolving in-progress pursuits, reducing the likelihood of crashes, or avoiding other adverse situations.

Tire Deflation Devices:

Authorized officers may deploy department-issued tire deflation devices to prevent or intervene in a pursuit. Tire deflation devices will not be used on any vehicle that normally operates with fewer than four pneumatic tires.

Types of Devices:

- **Stop Sticks:** A commercially manufactured tire deflation device intended for deployment in authorized active pursuits ahead of the pursued vehicle. “Stop Sticks” purchased by Saint Paul police department are the only authorized device for this purpose.
- **Fleeing Prevention Device:** A commercially manufactured device intended for deployment by an officer on a vehicle that is stopped. The “Terminator” and “Patrol Terminator” devices purchased by Saint Paul police department are the only devices authorized for this purpose.

“Stop Sticks” Device Deployment Procedures:

- Identification of a Location:
 - Deployment of the device must be made in an area of the roadway that is as straight as reasonably possible under the circumstances, clear of visual obstructions and allows adequate cover for the deploying officer(s).
 - Special care must be given to ensure that the device is not deployed within or near a sharp curve or turn in the roadway.
 - A location for deployment will be selected to reduce risk to the general public, including pedestrians, if the vehicle leaves the roadway when the tires deflate.

- Setup:
 - Squad cars driven by deploying officer(s) must be parked out of the direct route of travel of the subject vehicle and not used as a roadblock (unless authorized under the roadblock section). These squads must not be occupied and must have emergency lights activated.
 - Time and distance are to be considered by the deploying officer(s). If the deploying officer(s) feel that the risk factors are too great to safely deploy the device, they must abort the attempt.
 - The deploying officer(s) shall position the device and provide ample warning to dispatch and pursuing squads of the location and position of the device so pursuing officer(s) may avoid contact. Deploying officer(s) will move to a safe area providing protection.
 - Officer(s) must consider that a squad car may not provide adequate protection.

- Removal:
 - Once the pursued vehicle passes over the tire deflation device, the deploying officer shall remove the device from the roadway. No other officers shall exit their squads to remove the device.
 - The deploying officer shall then signal or radio pursuing squads that it is safe to continue the pursuit. The pursuit may then continue as department policy allows.

Fleeing Prevention Device Deployment Procedures:

Officers may deploy a Fleeing Prevention Device (FPD) to prevent a pursuit of a stationary or slow-moving vehicle (less than 25 mph). This tire deflation device will not be used on any vehicle that normally operates with fewer than four pneumatic tires.

- Authorized Deployment:
 - An officer may deploy the FPD when any of the following situations is present:
 - The driver has a known history of fleeing.
 - The suspect in the vehicle has active warrants.
 - The driver or occupant(s) exhibit behavior or movement indicative of fleeing; or circumstances exist that make the officer reasonably believe the driver may flee.
 - The officer can clearly articulate circumstances related to an investigation that led them to believe a vehicle may flee.
 - The officer can articulate a public safety risk if the individual in control moves the vehicle.

The ideal tactical placement for deployment is between the front and rear tires, close to the rear tire. When practical, officers shall verbally warn the driver of the vehicle that a tire

deflation device has been deployed and tire damage may occur if the vehicle is moved.

After the deployment of an FPD, an officer shall remain in close proximity to the vehicle while the device is deployed to update assisting officers on the vehicle and occupants' status. Officers should maintain a tactically advantageous position that provides cover and is out of the path of vehicle.

In a situation where the vehicle flees and a tire is deflated, officers are not allowed to pursue the vehicle unless it meets the requirements of an Authorized Pursuit as defined in General Order 443.00, "Vehicle Pursuit", Section 3, "INITIATION OF VEHICLE PURSUITS."

If the vehicle does not flee upon the completion of the stop, officers shall recover the device prior to the vehicle leaving and inform the driver when it is safe to leave.

Officers shall not use a FPD when the deployment cannot be done in a safe manner and/or may contribute to an escalation of force. Officers should not use unsafe tactics on a high-risk traffic stop for the sole purpose of deploying the device.

Reporting:

- After any FPD deployment where damage does NOT occur, the officer will document the deployment in the CAD comments of the stop or a police report.
- If the FPD deployment results in any tire or vehicle damage, a police report shall be written. This includes damage to tires or vehicles of uninvolved parties.
- All Stop Stick deployments or attempted deployments require a police report be written.
- The supervisor will make sure that if an uninvolved citizen's property is damaged by deployment of the Stop Sticks or a FPD that it is documented in a police report (to comply with [General Order 438.02: Claims against the City](#)) to include photographs of the damaged property.

Training:

The Training Unit will maintain the records of officers trained to deploy tire deflation devices and are responsible for providing ongoing training.

Administration:

- The Deputy Chief of Operations is responsible to purchase and issue equipment and maintain a current inventory of tire deflation devices.
- Unit commanders are responsible for effective deployment, reporting, reloading and redeployment, and for tracking each use of these devices.
- Unit Commanders are also responsible for reporting serial numbers for used "Stop Sticks" so replacement parts may be obtained.
- Tire deflation devices will be mounted and carried in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

- Keep the FPD's separate from other equipment to prevent inadvertent contact that could damage the FPD or other equipment.
- Store FPD's in a location that is easily accessible for rapid deployment.
- Officers are responsible for ensuring that the device is in working order at the beginning of their shift.

Deployed tire deflation device (post-use):

The county and city attorneys have advised that used tire deflation devices do not need to be retained as evidence, unless the use resulted in a crash involving great bodily harm or death. If the use of these devices results in this type of crash or critical incident, the device must be turned in as evidence and retained. Aside from this circumstance, used devices will be inspected, re-loaded, and returned to service.

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